

Perfectly ParKids



Painting by Shawni Judah

For kids who care about their world!

August 2007



What is ParKids?

Carlsbad Caverns National Park

What happens when you cross a group of 9 to 12-year-old kids and a national park in the middle of the desert? The answer is ParKids, a day camp for local area students where they learn about the natural resources of the surrounding region as well as those specific to Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Hands-on science experiences assist kids in learning about the park, gain an understanding of stewardship, and learn how they can practice resource conservation in their daily lives.

A thriving program since 1999, ParKids 2007 was a great success. Twelve participants attended each of the day camps, one held from June 4-8 and the second camp from June 11-15. The children are required to be members of the Carlsbad Boy's and Girl's Club, where the group met every morning before traveling to the scheduled location.



ParKids got their hands wet while learning about water erosion from the Soil and Water Conservation District, Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Each day is filled with different activities, demonstrations, and a variety of speakers from the community. Topics of study included plants and animals of the Chihuahuan Desert, the value of fire, cave geology, water, human history, and even how to identify specific fossils.

The children had the opportunity to hike in both Carlsbad Caverns National Park and the Lincoln National Forest, and they visited the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park. All of the activities contributed greatly to the program's overall goal of allowing kids to gain an appreciation and awareness of the resources around them, ask questions, and get their hands a little dirty.



ParKids learned about the ecosystem in and around the water at Sitting Bull Falls with a U.S. Forest Service Ranger.

The partners involved in this year's camps included the Carlsbad Soil and Water Conservation District, Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, U.S. Forest Service, New Mexico Game and Fish Department, and the National Park Service.

It is the hope of the Education Office at Carlsbad Caverns that ParKids will continue to allow more children the opportunity to experience and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the world around them.

Please contact the park for more information or sign-up dates.

Fun Facts About Carlsbad Caverns National Park



- The deepest part of Carlsbad Cavern is 1,037 feet. The Big Room is 754 feet under ground.
- Cave formations are called “speleothems.” Stalactites hang tightly to the ceiling; stalagmites grow up from the ground.
- There are over 30 miles of passageways in Carlsbad Cavern.
- Three species of bats live in the cave, but 16 species live in the park. Bats are the only true flying mammals.
- Jim White was the first person to explore the Cavern in 1898. Native Americans have known about the cave for much longer.
- Carlsbad Caverns National Park is part of the Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem. This desert region has high temperatures and very little rain.
- The amount of rain that falls on the surface determines how much water enters into the cave.
- We ALL leave an impact when entering the cave because we shed skin cells and lint (from our clothing), which are harmful to cave formations. Humans are affecting the cave even while enjoying it!
- We have volunteers that delicately clean the cave formations of lint. They are affectionately called “lint-pickers.”

Can You Guess Why We are Here?

The National Park Service is here for many reasons: to preserve and protect our natural and cultural resources, and to provide for the enjoyment, education and inspiration for all people (now and in the future).

The National Park system includes national parks and monuments, national seashores, scenic parkways and trails, national recreation areas, national battlefields and military parks, and national historic sites (to name a few). These are all special places that represent the beauty, history, and culture of America.

Did you know that every U.S.



“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”
~Aldo Leopold

citizen is an owner of national park lands? Therefore, we need YOU to help us take care of these wonderful places. Each person can do their part by following park rules, not littering, and being respectful to animals, plants, and artifacts in AND out of all national parks. Let us all protect our world for a better future.

Fun Fact: Cave...Cavern? What is the difference? (They are the same thing.)

Fun Fact: The NPS Badge represents all the things park rangers need to protect. Can you guess what they are?

Carl S. Bat Writes Home...

Dear Auntie and Uncle Freetail,

Summer here at Carlsbad Caverns National Park has been a blast! When we first arrived in early March from Mexico, I was tired from the long flight, but happy to sleep my first night in the cave. What an amazing place! We arrived at the natural entrance of the cave around dusk, perfect timing to snatch up some insects before settling in on the ceiling.

This is such a big cave! We get our own private "room" away from all the visitors so we can rest peacefully in the daytime and be active at night. I just learned sleeping all day and being awake at night is called "nocturnal"...but you both probably knew that.

Auntie Freetail, I wish you would have come to New Mexico this year because there are so many of your friends asking about you. Marjorie (you know—



Me with some new human friends.

Ralph's cousin) wanted your famous moth muffin pie recipe. I told her she'd just have to wait until next year.

I can't tell you how exciting it is being here at Carlsbad

Caverns. I have made so many friends. There are thousands of bats to play with and to trade stories with. I even got some tips on how to use my echolocation to help me navigate at night. Bernie, who lives two stalactites over

from us, said that if I click and make sounds more often, I have a better chance of the soundwaves helping me find a tasty insect (or help keep me from crashing into a prickly cactus or something)! I am still learning, but Mom says I am getting better every day.

I hope your wing is feeling better, and that next summer you will be able to fly with Uncle Freetail from Mexico to

Carlsbad. What an amazing (but long) trip!

We will be back home around late October, or when the temperature gets too cold for us here. I think the saddest thing will be leaving my new friends when we head south, although I will see them next summer when we migrate back to Carlsbad Caverns!

Uh-oh...I think Mom and Dad are coming back from their dinner. (It is almost dawn and I am supposed to be asleep by now.) See you soon.

Love,

Carl



Some of my bat buddies.

Adopt A Bat at Carlsbad Caverns National Park

You can help Carl S. Bat and all the other bats that live in the park by joining our Adopt-A-Bat program.

In the summer evenings, many visitors come to watch the huge population of Mexican free-tail bats fly out of the cave for their nightly meal. There are over 250,000 Mexican free-tail

bats in the cave in the summer, and we would like to keep the population as safe and healthy as possible. That is where YOU come in!

Visitors have the opportunity to adopt their very own bat, either at the Bat Flight program or at the CCGMA bookstore. For only \$5, visitors

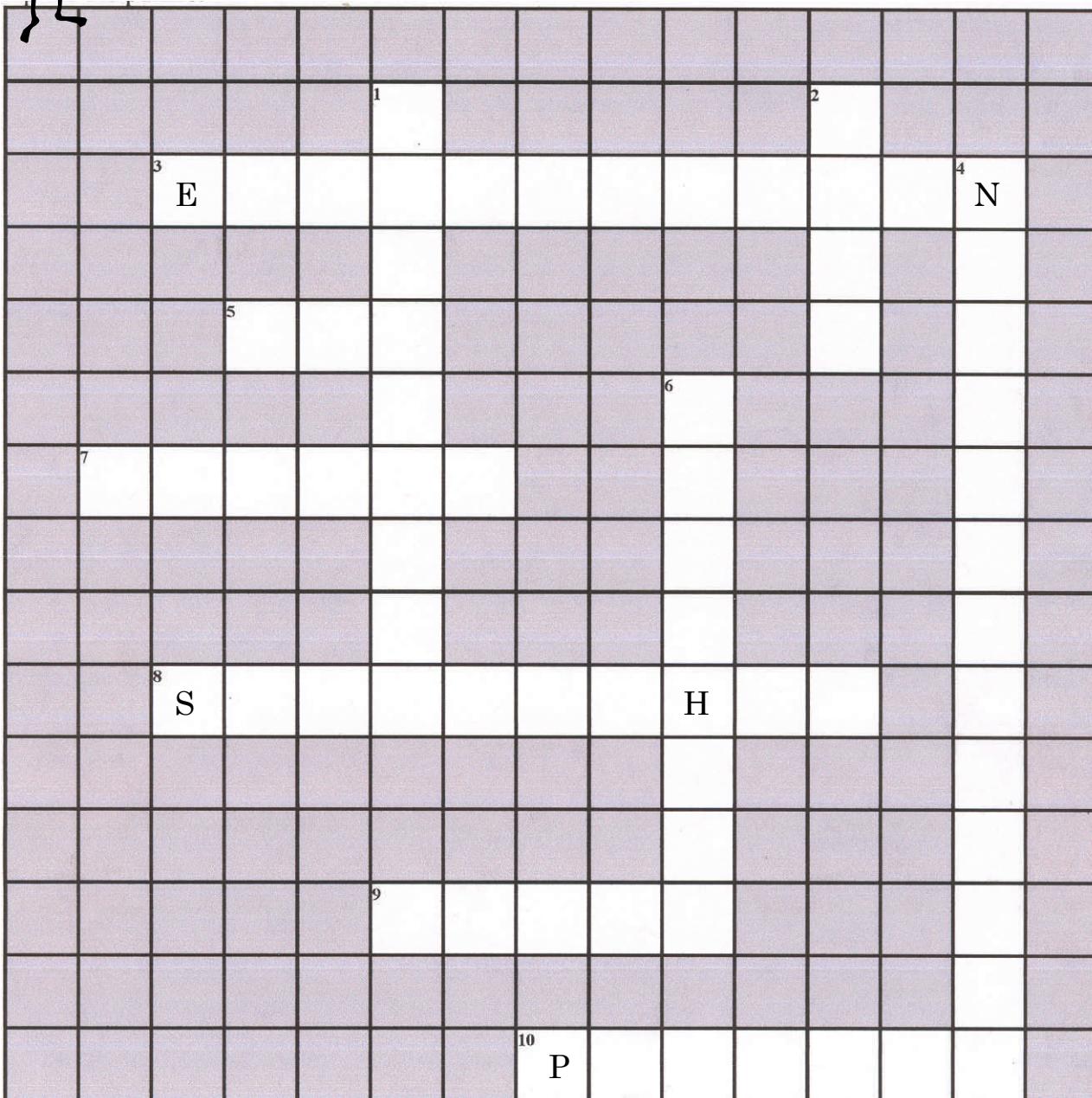
get an awesome package that includes stickers, bat info, and a birth certificate for their bat. All the money from the program goes towards bat research. The best thing is that you can come visit your "very own" bat at Carlsbad Caverns anytime you'd like during the summer!



Carlsbad Caverns Crossword



Complete the crossword. Test your memory! The magazine can help you find information you might need. Good luck!



Across

3. A bat's navigation system
5. The only true flying mammal
7. A deep, natural hole in the ground
8. Another word for cave formation
9. A topic of study for ParKids—a reptile that slithers
10. Name of daycamp that teaches about the resources of the area

Down

1. Being active at night and resting during the day.
2. What we shed from our clothing that is harmful to cave formations.
4. Special places in our country that belong to all its citizens (2 words)
6. First explorer of Carlsbad Cavern (2 words)

ParKids in Action!



Carlsbad Caverns National Park

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